



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

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LUNAR AND PLANETARY LABORATORY

PERSONAL

1 March 1968

USG-5

Dr. Homer E. Newell  
Associate Administrator for Space  
Science and Applications  
NASA Headquarters  
Code SL  
Washington, D. C. 20546

NASA review completed

Dear Dr. Newell:

I picked up some items about the Russian space program that would seem to be not without interest. Possibly, you are already acquainted with them. In August 1957 the Russian government received a notice from their representatives abroad that the Americans were going to have a conference in December 1957 on sending a spacecraft to the moon. The secretary who typed the message left out a line by mistake so that the message actually read the Americans were going to send a spacecraft to the moon December 1957. Korolev's group had a considerable arsenal of rocketry but had not seriously developed scientific equipment for space. The message they received caused a panic and Sputnik I was organized on a crash basis and launched October 4, 1957. The Russians were amazed at the American reaction which was, of course, different from what they had expected. It was then realized that they had made a mistake. The space race had begun and was continued.

A second item of interest relates to the Russian spacecraft Venus IV. [redacted]

[redacted] the spacecraft did not reach the surface of the planet but collapsed before, since it was designed to withstand pressures of around 10 atm, which was the surface pressure the Russian scientists had estimated. The collapse took place at pressure of about 20 atm.

I have been invited to attend the meeting October 1968 in Kiev where the Venus results will be announced. I suppose that NASA representatives have been invited also. I have informed Professor Martynov and INTOURIST of my tentative acceptance.

[redacted] Korolev started the space developments in the early 1930's. He had been inspired by the Russian inventor of rockets, Tsiolkovsky, who started his work in the 1880's and '90's. Korolev wanted to send rockets to the moon and the planets. His interest was largely technological (he was an aircraft designer), not scientific. [redacted] the Russian program has somewhat suffered from the death of Korolev [redacted] the death of the leader of the Russian space program had left the program weakened). [redacted] the investment of the Russian space program is perhaps one-half or one-third of the U. S. program, though any such statement is of rather uncertain significance.

With best regards,

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Sincerely yours,

Gerard P. Kuiper  
Director

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